TRIGUN

Long time ago, there was large destruction called 'Great war'
Most of worlds are covered with sand.
The world where human race greatly decreased the living space.
...called "S...
...person tha...
...story at th...

CHARA...

...SHINO
SIGN★M...

TM

2

ORIGINAL STORY BY RYO HOSHINO
ART BY ARIKO ITOU
ORIGINAL CHARACTER BY NAO GOTO

VIZ SELECT

NOW A HIT ANIME!

Long time ago, there was large destruction called
Most of worlds are covered with sand.
The world where human race greatly decreased the living space
There was one girl who lived strongly in a severe desert.
Her name is Honoka.
She will be called "Sword dancer" in the future.
She is a person that comes to be regarded as a first class "Dune runner".
This is a story at the apprentice period of her yet.

ORIGINAL AUTHOR★YO HOSHINO
COMIC★ARIKO ITO
ORIGINAL CHARACTER DESIGN★NAO GOTO

THE THIRD™ VOL.2

MY FRIENDS:

TONIGHT, BEGIN TO MAKE YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE.
LISTEN TO THE SIGHING OF THE STARS;
BE CLEANSED BY THE WINDS.
LET YOURSELVES, DREAMERS ALL, APPRECIATE
THESE BLESSINGS AS CHILDREN MIGHT.
TOMORROW YOUR SEARCH WILL BE JUST BEGINNING...

THE THIRD
Apprentice Girl on the Desert Planet

A long time ago, there was a large destruction called the "Great War."
Most of the world is covered with sand.
In the world where the human race greatly decreased the living space,
there was one girl who lived strongly in a severe desert.
Her name is Honoka.
She will be called the "Sword Dancer" in the future.
She is a person that will come to be regarded as
a first class "Dune Runner."
This is a story of the apprentice period of her life.

The Third Vol. 2
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THE THIRD™

VOLUME 2

Story by
Ryo Hoshino

Art by
Ariko Ito

Original Character Design by
Nao Goto

THE THIRD

Apprentice Girl on the Desert Planet

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CENTURIES AFTER THE GREAT WAR DESTROYED CIVILIZATION AND TURNED ALL LAND INTO DESERT...

...HUMANS STILL THRIVE IN THIS PLANET'S HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT.

IN A DANGEROUS OUTLANDS REGION CALLED THE ROKUGOU DESERT LIVES A MISTRESS OF THE DUNES...

...A REAL PROFES-SIONAL ...

THERE TRULY IS A GIRL LIKE THIS.

WORK 07
[A Day in the Apprentice Girl's Life]

WORK 07
[A Day in the Apprentice Girl's Life]

...CHAN! HONO-CHAN!

ΣΣΣ3d...

...MILLIE?

YAWN
I MET UP WITH YOUR OLD MAN LAST NIGHT.
YOU GOT THAT RIGHT.

UNYA...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, MILLIE?
HA HA HA! HONO-CHAN IS STILL HALF ASLEEP!

LET'S EAT BREAK-FAST! ♡
THIS GIRL IS MILLIE.
SHE IS THE DAUGHTER OF A MAN NAMED ZANKAN. I OFTEN GO TO HIM FOR HELP AND ADVICE BECAUSE HE IS A MASTER OF TECHNOS, THE TECHNOLOGY THAT THE THIRD HAS FORBIDDEN.

GOOD MORNING, DAD!
MORNING.
THIS GUY IS MILLIE'S OLD MAN.
AH! I SEE THAT HONO-CHAN IS AWAKE AT LAST.
ぴょこ
NOW, MILLIE ...
...YOU DIDN'T WAKE HER UP, DID YOU?
Who me?
I DIDN'T DO IT.
GOOD-NESS, WHAT A PROBLEM THIS GIRL IS.
I'M SORRY SHE ACTS SO SPOILED WHEN YOU COME, HONO-CHAN.
THAT'S NOT TRUE!
NO WORRIES. I'M HAPPY WHEN I'M WITH MILLIE!
ME, TOO!

HONO-CHAN!
HOW LONG ARE YOU GOING TO STAY THIS TIME?
THIS TIME IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH BOGIE'S MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE.
I JUST STOPPED IN FOR A VISIT, AND I FIGURED "WHAT THE HECK."

A BUSY TECHNOS MECHANIC LIKE HIM...
...MUST REALLY HATE IT WHEN CUSTOMERS DROP OUT OF THE SKY LIKE THIS...
...SO I FEEL BAD STAYING HERE TOO LONG.
WHAT?!

WELL...
ACTUALLY, BOGIE'S MAINTENANCE IS JUST AN EXCUSE.
THE REAL REASON I CAME HERE WAS TO SEE MILLIE.

HONO-CHAN!
HA HA HA!
OH, YOU'RE NO BOTHER.
DON'T GIVE IT ANOTHER THOUGHT.
MILLIE AND I ARE ALWAYS PLEASED TO SEE YOU.
OLD MAN...
SINCE SHE LEARNED TO READ, SHE DOES NOTHING BUT ASK ME QUESTIONS I CAN'T ANSWER.
WHILE YOU'RE PLAYING WITH MILLIE AND HELPING HER WITH HER STUDIES...
...PLEASE WATCH OVER HER.
SO, YOU CAN READ ALREADY, HUH?
HEH HEH HEH...

READING IS REALLY EASY!
I'VE EVEN MEMORIZED SOME OF MY BOOKS!

THE OLD MAN MUST REALLY BE PROUD OF YOU.
GOODNESS, WHAT SHOULD I DO?

WHAT KIND OF BOOKS DO YOU LIKE, HONO-CHAN?
I'LL READ THEM, TOO!

YOU CAN'T BE LEAVING ALREADY, CAN YOU?

IT'S TOO COMFORT-ABLE HERE.

LEAV-ING IS ALWAYS DIFFI-CULT.

YEAH.

I HAVE TO LEAVE BEFORE DAWN.

DON'T BE A STRANGER.

EVEN THOUGH I COME AND GO AS I PLEASE...

...LEAVING IS HARD DURING TIMES LIKE THESE.

SORRY.

SEE YOU NEXT TIME, MILLIE.

MMM...

HONO-CHAAAN...

I'LL BE HEART-SICK WHEN THE MORNING COMES.

NOW...

...I'VE GOT TO BE GOING.

I CAN TELL BY LOOKING AT BOGIE ...
...THAT YOU WORK VERY HARD, HONO-CHAN.
I STILL HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO.
DON'T PUSH YOURSELF TOO HARD. TO LIVE BY YOURSELF IN THIS DESERT...
...IT'S A TOUGH LIFE.
SO...
...COME BY WHENEVER YOU WANT.

"MY FRIENDS: TOMORROW YOUR SEARCH WILL BE JUST BEGINNING..."
"TONIGHT, BEGIN TO MAKE..."
"...YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE."
RIGHT?
"LISTEN TO THE SIGHING OF THE STARS...
...BE CLEANSED BY THE WINDS..."

"...LET YOURSELVES, DREAMERS ALL, APPRECIATE THESE BLESSINGS AS CHILDREN MIGHT."

WORK 08
[Old Days Memory]

CENTURIES AFTER THE GREAT WAR DESTROYED CIVILIZATION AND TURNED ALL LAND INTO DESERT...
...HUMANS STILL THRIVE IN THIS PLANET'S HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT.
IN A DANGEROUS OUTLANDS REGION CALLED THE ROKUGOU DESERT LIVES A MISTRESS OF THE DUNES...
WOW!
...A REAL PROFESSIONAL ...
THERE TRULY IS A GIRL LIKE THIS.
IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I SMELLED WATER.
IT LOOKS AS IF NO ONE ELSE IS HERE.
GO RINSE THE SAND OFF WHILE WE REFILL OUR WATER TANKS.
THIS IS MY PARTNER, BOGIE.

HE TAKES CARE OF OUR DUNE TANK.
HE'S A MACHINE WITH ARTIFICIAL INTELLI-GENCE.
EVEN THOUGH THERE'S NO ONE AROUND TO SEE...
...MAKE SURE TO MAINTAIN YOUR MODESTY.
FOR AN AI, HE ALWAYS TALKS TOO MUCH.
WHAT IS THAT SUP-POSED TO MEAN?!
THIS PLACE...
...SURE BRINGS BACK A LOT OF MEMORIES, DOESN'T IT?
I MADE A PROMISE...
...ON THAT DAY...

...SEVEN YEARS AGO.
STOP FOLLOWING ME!
IT'S NOT MY IDEA OF A GOOD TIME EITHER, BUT...
...THIS IS THE JOB I WAS GIVEN.
HONOKA DIDN'T...
...GIVE YOU THE JOB!

NOT YOU.

WOLKEN GAVE THE ORDER.

.....!

THE ONE WHO SAID I SHOULD MAKE MY OWN DECISIONS ...

... WAS GRAMPS HIMSELF!

WHY DON'T YOU GO BACK NOW?

THIS IS THE *FIRST* OASIS I *EVER* DISCOVERED!

SO THIS IS *MY* PLACE!

.....

CHILDREN WHO SEPARATE THEMSELVES FROM THE HERD BECOME EASY PICKINGS.

YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT.

I CAN'T GO HOME.
BECAUSE...
...HONOKA'S NOT LIKE THE OTHER KIDS.
EVEN THOUGH IT LOOKS LIKE AN EYE...
...I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING WITH IT.
WHY AM I CURSED WITH THIS THING?

HONOKA ASKS GRAMPS ABOUT IT...
...BUT HE WON'T TELL HER ANYTHING.
HONOKA...
...NO ONE KNOWS WHAT THE THIRD EYE MEANS.
YOU MUST DISCOVER ITS MEANING FOR YOURSELF.
UNTIL THEN, TAKE THIS HANDKER-CHIEF.
DON'T REMOVE IT IN FRONT OF ANYONE...
...UNTIL YOU MEET SOMEONE YOU TRUST.
SHOULD I BE EMBARRASSED BY IT?
WILL PEOPLE HATE ME IF THEY SEE IT?
TELL ME, BOGIE!!
.....

...
MAY ...
... MAYBE ...
...I'M REALLY...
... NOT ...
... REALLY NOT HUMAN ...
IF YOU SAY THAT THE THIRD ARE NOT HUMAN ...
... THEN YOU ARE PROBABLY CORRECT.
...
!!
THEIR THIRD EYE IS ABLE TO CONTROL ANY KIND OF ELECTRICAL CIRCUIT.
AND WITH THAT POWER, THEY RULE OVER THIS PLANET.
THEY ARE SUPER-HUMAN.

...BLUE.
YOURS IS ...
... THE NORMAL COLOR OF A COMMON COSMIC EYE IS RED.
BUT HONOKA KNOWS...
WHEN THEY LOOK AT THIS THING ON MY FOREHEAD...
EVERYONE WILL BE DISGUSTED.
...I DON'T HAVE THEM.
THE AMAZING POWERS THAT YOU TALKED ABOUT, BOGIE...
I'M JUST A BAD COPY.

I WISH I DIDN'T HAVE THIS THING!
HONOKA!
I DETECT SIGNS OF LIFE...
...BUT I CANNOT DEAL WITH IT IN MY PRESENT FORM.
WE SHOULD LEAVE THIS PLACE IMMEDIATELY.

YOU'RE NOT REALLY WORRIED ...
... ABOUT ME ...
.....
WE'LL TALK ABOUT THAT LATER.
FOR NOW, WE SHOULD LEA--
LEAVE ME ALONE!
I'M ALONE NO MATTER WHERE I GO.
ALONE WITH MYSELF ...
HONOKA!

I HATE YOU, BOGIE!

HUH?

TO RUN INTO SUCH A CREATURE AT A TIME LIKE THIS...

A CARNIV-OROUS REPTILE!

UNLESS I GET SOME HELP, I'M DOOMED!
WH-WHAT SHOULD I DO?!
GRRUU...
WHAT A BIG MOUTH YOU HAVE, GRANDMA!
BUT I'M TOO SCARED TO MOVE!
GOTTA RUN AWAY!
ガッ!!

VRRM!
HONOKA!!
DEATH...
キャアアッ
!!
BOGIE!!

BOSIE TRIED TO PROTECT ME!

NEXT...

...I MUST...

...AVENGE HIM!

SHINK

BOGIE!!
ARE YOU OKAY?!
ANSWER IF YOU CAN HEAR ME!
BOGIE!!
I AM SO SORRY!
DON'T HATE ME! IT'S ALL MY FAULT...!
DON'T DIE!
BOGIE!!
UNFORTUNATELY...
...MY MEMORY BANKS DO NOT INCLUDE THE CONCEPT OF "DEATH."

BOGIE!!
THANK GOOD-NESS!
UHM!
I'M SO SORRY!
ABOUT THE QUESTION YOU ASKED A MOMENT AGO...
I DO NOT HATE YOU, HONOKA.
FOR ONE THING, I'M NOT PROGRAMMED FOR IT.
IF THIS SITUATION IS UNSATIS-FACTORY ...
... THEN YOU SHOULD MODIFY MY ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE SYSTEM.
IF YOU TRULY WISH IT ...
... I'M SURE THAT WOLKEN WILL HELP YOU.
NO.
I WOULDN'T DO ANYTHING LIKE THAT.
NOTHING CAN REPLACE YOU.

HONOKA...
...REALLY LOVES YOU THE WAY YOU ARE!
I WONDER WHY HUMANS GO THROUGH SUCH CURIOUS CHANGES.
JUST WHEN I THINK YOU'RE MOST SAD, YOU SUDDENLY LAUGH.
.....

?
DO YOU REALLY FIND HUMANS TO BE SO STRANGE?
I AM OFTEN UNABLE TO UNDERSTAND THEM.
LET'S HEAD BACK SOON, HONOKA.
BUT...
I'LL HAVE TO APOLOGIZE TO GRAMPS...
...FOR RUNNING OUT LIKE THAT.
WOLKEN...
"IF YOU DON'T WANT TO BE MIS-UNDER-STOOO ..."
...YOU SHOULD OPEN UP ONLY TO PEOPLE YOU FEEL YOU CAN TRUST."
THAT IS WHAT HE PROBABLY MEANT.
MMM...
I DON'T GET IT...
I SEE.

IT IS BEST TO BE YOURSELF.
THAT'S WHAT WOLKEN'S ADVICE MEANS.

...YEAH.
I WILL WORK HARD AT BECOMING STRONGER.
SO IF WE'RE EVER ATTACKED AGAIN...
I'LL BE ABLE TO PROTECT YOU.

VERY GOOD.

UNTIL THAT HAPPENS, I WILL DEPEND ON YOU TO GET ME A STRONGER BODY.

I PROMISE!

THEN...

...EVEN IF WE TRAVEL FAR...

...WE WON'T BE AFRAID.

I PROMISE...
DID YOU SAY SOME-THING?
I WAS JUST TALKING TO MYSELF!
"HONOKA LOVES BOOBIE!" RIGHT.
YOU WERE CUTE BACK IN THE OLD DAYS.
GYAAAH! DON'T SAY THAT!

WORK 09
[Against the Dark]

...HUMANS ARE STILL THRIVING IN THE HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT OF THIS PLANET...

A FEW CENTURIES AFTER THE GREAT WAR CAUSED THE DESTRUCTION OF CIVILIZATION AND TURNED THE LAND INTO DESERT...

IN A DANGEROUS OUTLANDS REGION CALLED THE ROKUGOU DESERT LIVES A MISTRESS OF THE DUNES...

CHINK

...A REAL PRO-FES-SION-AL ...

YOU'RE IN A GOOD MOOD TODAY.

YOU SEEM TO BE ALL EXCITED ABOUT SOME-THING.

OF COURSE, I'M EAGER TO GET STARTED. ♡

IT'S THE FIRST JOB WE'VE HAD IN A LONG TIME THAT'S FIT FOR A DUNE RUNNER!

THERE TRULY IS A GIRL LIKE THIS.

"INVESTIGATE AND REPORT ON THE RESEARCH FACILITY DISAPPEARANCES."
THERE ARE ALREADY MANY MYSTERIES CONNECTED WITH THIS PLACE.
ONE MORE ...
...MAKES THE PLACE ALL THE MORE DANGEROUS.
I KNOW ALL THAT.
ビガッ
BUT, IT'S OUR BIG CHANCE, RIGHT?
THE MORE EXPERIENCE WE GET, THE SOONER WE'LL BE ABLE TO CATCH UP WITH LIDELL.
BOGIE, ABOUT LIDELL...
DO YOU REMEMBER HER?
HOW COULD I FORGET?
NOT MANY PEOPLE ARE WILDER THAN YOU.

YOU'RE TOO SHORT.

WELL, YOU KNOW YOU PROBABLY WON'T SUCCEED.

GRR...

.....

BECAUSE EVERYONE ELSE IS DOING IT.

YOU WANT TO BE A DUNE RUNNER, HONOKA?

WHY?

IN ORDER TO HEAL IT, THERE IS SOMETHING I NEED TO FIND.

THE MAIN PART OF THIS JOB IS COLLECTING INFORMATION, RIGHT?

I HAVE A SCAR HERE...

...IT WAS COOL HOW SHE ALWAYS HAD SUCH A DETER-MINED LOOK IN HER EYES.

LIDELL PICKED ON ME A LOT, BUT...

...BE-CAME A DUNE RUNNER.

THAT'S WHY I...

I WANT TO BECOME A QUALIFIED DUNE RUNNER AS SOON AS I CAN.

THEN I CAN STAND UP TO HER.

ARE THERE ANY SIGNS OF LIFE IN THE AREA?

ACCORDING TO REPORTS ...

...THERE SHOULD BE EIGHT SCIENTISTS HERE.

THIS PLACE GIVES ME THE CREEPS.

HUH?!

YOU'RE EXPECTING SURVIVORS?

WHERE?!

IN THE ROOM YOU ARE IN NOW.

WHAT... IS THIS?
WHAT'S WRONG, HONOKA?
THEY ARE ALL DEAD!
DAMN!

!!

I CAN'T CUT—

!!

ACK!

THIS WAY!
...UNLESS YOU WANT TO DIE!
DON'T DAWDLE...
WAIT!
HUH?!
THANK GOOD-NESS.
IT LOOKS AS IF WE STILL HAVE POWER.
BEEP
KA-CHUNK

LIDELL?!
OH...
YOU JUST RECOGNIZED ME? I'M HURT.
WHAT'S A NICE GIRL LIKE YOU DOING IN A PLACE LIKE THIS, HONOKA?

I SEE. HONOKA BECAME A DUNE RUNNER, HUH?
ARE YOU GOOD AT YOUR JOB? LUCKILY, YOU WEREN'T INJURED TOO BADLY, BUT...
...YOU SAW THOSE DEAD BODIES, DIDN'T YOU?
THAT...?

MY SWORD FIGHTING TECHNIQUE...

...DIDN'T WORK ON IT!

I COULDN'T EVEN *CUT* IT WITH MY KATANA!

THAT THING THAT ATTACKED ME BEFORE, *WHAT WAS IT?!*

CALM DOWN.

OKAY. THAT SHOULD TAKE CARE OF YOU.

THE THING YOU FOUGHT IS...

...A SCRAP OF A SOLDIER VIRUS LEFTOVER FROM THE GREAT WAR.

IT LIVES ALMOST FOR-EVER BY JUMP-ING FROM HOST TO HOST.

THAT'S ALL I KNEW ABOUT IT.

BUT, THAT'S ENOUGH.

IT HAD A GOOD TIME EATING MY FAMILY.

I WAS THE ONLY ONE SPARED.

REVENGE IS POINTLESS AGAINST THAT THING.

THE THING THAT YOU TOLD ME ABOUT BEFORE...

.....

ACTING ALONE, I COULD DO NOTHING.

THE FACT THAT I DIDN'T EVEN TRY...

I HATED MYSELF BECAUSE ALL I COULD DO WAS WATCH.

...SCAR.

I STILL CARRY THE...

YOU WILL SATISFY THE CURIOSITY OF YOUR CLIENTS IF YOU GO BACK AND TELL THEM THAT THERE WERE NO SURVIVORS.

LIDELL!!

GO HOME, HONOKA.

YOUR JOB WAS TO REPORT ON THE SITUATION HERE, WASN'T IT?

OUR DISAGREE-MENT IS PERSONAL.

I'VE FOUND IT AT LAST.

I BECAME A DUNE RUNNER IN ORDER TO FIND THIS MONSTER.

URUZU

WE'RE WASTING TIME--

!!
SHIT! IT'S FAST!
GO AWAY, HONOKA!

YOU MUST BE KIDDING!

10

...IT BROKE!

THE KATANA...

HONOKA!
AAAAAH!
ドカッ
!!
ピタッ

I'M NO MATCH FOR THIS THING!

LIDELL!

IT'S NO USE!

...I DON'T KNOW HOW TO FIGHT IT!

WITH MY KATANA BROKEN...

!!

"I HATED MYSELF BECAUSE ALL I COULD DO WAS WATCH!"

!

...WHAT ELSE CAN I...?

I CAN'T DO ANY-THING BUT WATCH!

...BUT...

I...

"THE FACT THAT I DIDN'T EVEN TRY..."

"I STILL CARRY THE SCAR."

WHY...

...WHY DID I WANT TO BE A DUNE RUNNER?!

IN A SITUATION LIKE THIS...

...IT WASN'T SO YOU COULD GIVE UP!

...IS CUT THAT CREATURE.
ALL YOU CAN DO WITH A BROKEN SWORD?...
JUST WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO DO...
H-HONOKA?

...IT TURNED OUT THAT YOU SAVED ME.
HA HA ...
AFTER I ACTED SO CONCEITED...
HEY!
WHAT DID YOU CALL THAT MOVE?
HOW DID YOU DO IT?!
UH...I WONDER.
...HONOKA.
... YOU'VE GOTTEN STRONGER ...
BUT IT'S TRUE ...

AAAH…
AND I THOUGHT THAT I WAS THE ONE WHO WAS THE BIG SISTER.
IT'S BECAUSE YOU WERE THERE FOR ME, LIDELL…
…THAT I AM HERE FOR YOU NOW.
JEEZ.
HONOKA…
…YOU WIN AGAIN!

WORK 10
[Stand By Me]

CENTURIES AFTER THE GREAT WAR DESTROYED CIVILIZATION AND TURNED ALL LAND INTO DESERT...

...A REAL PROFES-SIONAL...

THERE TRULY IS A GIRL LIKE THIS.

WHAT?!

YOU MEAN YOU CAN'T DO IT?!

...HUMANS STILL THRIVE IN THIS PLANET'S HOSTILE ENVIRON-MENT.

IN A DANGEROUS OUTLANDS REGION CALLED THE ROKUGOU DESERT LIVES A MISTRESS OF THE DUNES...

THE TRUTH IS, THIS IS AN UNUSUAL JOB...

I CAN FIX ALMOST ANYTHING MADE OF METAL, EVEN A RIFLE FROM THE GREAT WAR.

I HATE TO SAY THIS, BUT THERE'S NOT MUCH CALL FOR THAT SORT OF WORK, AND I HAVE NO EXPERIENCE DOING IT.
BUT SOMETHING LIKE THIS...
...I CAN'T REPAIR THE BLADE OF A KATANA.
.....
A KATANA IS AN UNUSUAL WEAPON FOR A WOMAN TO CARRY.
WHAT HAPPENED, HONOKA?
BOGIE...
HE COULDN'T FIX MY KATANA, EITHER...
AH, NO.
I'M FINE, THANKS.
WOULDN'T YOU RATHER HAVE A NEW KNIFE INSTEAD?
I THINK I HAVE A GOOD ONE IN THE BACK--

YOU'RE DUE AT AN INTERVIEW FOR A NEW ASSIGNMENT.
YOU CAN'T MEET A CLIENT HOLDING A BROKEN SWORD IN YOUR HAND.
WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST?
IF YOU CAN'T FIND SOMEONE TO FIX YOUR SWORD IN A DESERT TOWN LIKE EMPORIUM ...
... WOULDN'T IT BE BETTER TO STOP LOOKING?
I'LL TELL YOU SOMETHING I'VE BEEN TRYING NOT TO THINK ABOUT...
I'M AFRAID THAT MY KATANA WOULDN'T BE WORTH ANYTHING EVEN IF IT WAS REPAIRED.
I KNOW THAT, BUT I DON'T WANT TO ACCEPT IT.

UGH.....

.....

CAN YOU THINK OF ANYONE ELSE TO TRY?

!!

WAIT A MINUTE! IT WAS THE SHOP OF GRAMPS' FRIEND!

I HAVE A VAGUE MEMORY OF A PLACE I SAW A LONG TIME AGO.

SOME-WHERE IN THIS TOWN...

...THERE WAS A SHOP THAT DID METAL-WORK ON KATANAS.

IF I COULD ONLY RE-MEMBER--

HE TOOK ME THERE ONCE...

.....

CLOSED

HE'S QUITE OLD, AFTER ALL.

• • • •

THE OWNER IS SICK IN BED.

HE'S CLOSED UP HIS SHOP, PERHAPS PERMANENT-LY.

A CUSTOMER! WE DON'T SEE MANY OF THOSE LATELY.

BUT, YOU'RE OUT OF LUCK.

WELL, WELL.

WHAT ARE YOU SO SAD ABOUT?

DON'T TELL ME IT'S OVER!

What a spirited young girl.

IT'S OVER.

MEI LIN!

MISS HONOKA?

A Gift.

ARGH! JEEZ. I GIVE UP.

THE DOCTOR IS STILL TALKING TO THE PREVIOUS PATIENT, SO...

...I HAD SOME TIME TO GET AWAY BY MY-SELF.

TODAY THE DOCTOR AND I ARE MAKING HOUSE CALLS.

IT'S GREAT TO SEE YOU, MEI LIN.

HOW'S WORK GOING?

WHAT ABOUT YOU, MISS HONOKA?

ARE YOU GOING TO HANG OUT IN TOWN FOR A WHILE?

MISS HONOKA, IF YOU ARE FREE AT THE MOMENT...

...WHY DON'T WE GET SOME TEA?

……

リナ＝はぁ……

AND SO, TO SAVE HER...

...YOU BROKE YOUR SWORD.

I DIDN'T MEAN TO SAVE HER.

I JUST KIND OF GOT CARRIED AWAY.

YEAH...

SINCE IT WAS MADE ONLY FOR PRACTICING, IT'S NOT REALLY MUCH OF A SWORD, BUT...

WAS THAT MR. WOLKEN'S SWORD?

I TRAINED WITH IT SO MUCH, I GOT USED TO USING IT.
AND WHEN I CARRIED IT, I FELT AS IF GRAMPS WAS CLOSE TO ME.
I WANTED TO HAVE IT REPAIRED SO THAT AT LEAST IT LOOKED ALL RIGHT.
THE EXPERT SWORDSMAN, "WIND'S BLADE" WOLKEN...
I USED TO HELP THE DOCTOR WHEN HE WENT INTO THE BORDER LANDS.
HONOR AND LOVE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN ATTACHED TO THAT NAME.
YEAH. EVERYBODY RESPECTED THE DOCTOR.
"HONOKA..."
HE HAD A TOUGH LIFE, THOUGH.

"A KATANA IS JUST METAL."
"SWORD FIGHTING IS JUST SOMETHING YOU LEARN."
"WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THE WILL OF THE ONE WHO USES THEM."
"DO NOT BE MISLED BY THINGS YOU SEE OR HEAR."
"TO YOUR OWN SELF, BE TRUE."

EVEN THOUGH I HAVE THE COSMIC EYE, I'M NOT ONE OF THE THIRD.
I AM GRATEFUL TO THOSE WHO TOOK ME IN, AN ORPHANED BABY.
THE WHOLE CARAVAN--EVERYONE TREATED ME NICE, LIKE FAMILY.
I REALLY AM GRATEFUL TO THEM.
BUT...
I THINK ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO RAISED ME.
...I DION'T WANT TO BE SPOILED BY THEM FOREVER.

THAT'S WHY, AS SOON AS I COULD...
...I WANTED TO BECOME A QUALIFIED DUNE RUNNER.
BUT, EVEN THEN...

...INSTEAD OF BECOMING QUALIFIED...
...I MAKE MISTAKES INSTEAD.
I EVEN BROKE GRAMPS' KATANA.
I'VE NEVER HEARD OF ANYONE WHO WAS PERFECT FROM THE GET-GO.
NO SUCH PERSON EXISTS.
.....

AS YOU KNOW, I'M A MEDICAL ANDROID.
I'M A LOT OLDER THAN I LOOK.
AT THE MOMENT I'M THE HOSPITAL'S HEAD NURSE, BUT....
...WHEN I STARTED, I WAS REALLY CLUMSY AND GOT YELLED AT A LOT BY THE DOCTOR.
BUT THAT WAS DECADES AGO.
SO, YOU SEE?
IT'S OKAY TO MAKE MISTAKES.
IF YOU GAIN EXPERIENCE, MISS HONOKA--
NO...
THAT'S NOT MY PROBLEM, MEI LIN.
NO!

I ALWAYS THINK...

...IF GRAMPS HAD BEEN THERE...

...IF THE CREW OF THE CARAVAN HAD BEEN THERE...

ANY ONE OF THEM WOULD HAVE SUCCEEDED WHERE I FAILED.

I AM...

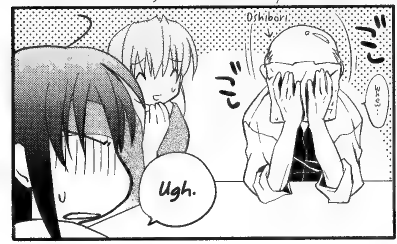
...DIFFER-ENT.

WHEN I FOUGHT THAT THING I SHOULDN'T HAVE ALLOWED MYSELF TO BE DISTRACTED. I SHOULDN'T HAVE LET MY GUARD DOWN!

I'LL NEVER BE AS GOOD AS THEY ARE, NO MATTER HOW MUCH EXPERIENCE I HAVE.

GRAMPS, I'M STILL JUST AN AMATEUR!

*Oshibori -a warm hand towel given in restaurants to clean your hands before a meal



IT'S NOT ...

...SOR-ROW.

STILL SORRY, ARE YOU?

I JUST THINK THERE MIGHT HAVE BEEN A BETTER WAY TO DEAL WITH THE SITUATION, THAT'S ALL.

YOU DIDN'T RUN AWAY FROM THE CARAVAN BECAUSE YOU WANTED TO BE JUST LIKE WOLKEN, DID YOU?

REGRET AND REFLECTION ARE TWO DIFFERENT THINGS.

THAT'S ALL RIGHT, THEN.

I WANTED TO BE MY OWN PERSON.
YOU CALL IT RUNNING AWAY!
I CALL IT BECOMING INDEPENDENT!
HAVE YOU REALLY... THOUGHT ABOUT IT?
"I DON'T UNDER-STAND!"
YOU KNOW, HONOKA ...
"I'M DOING JUST WHAT YOU TOLD ME TO, GRAMPS ~-"
...IT'S NOT WRONG TO ASPIRE TO BE AS GOOD AS YOUR ELDERS.
YOU CAN LEARN A LOT FROM THEM.

"JUST LOOKING LIKE SOMEONE DOESN'T MEAN THAT YOU ARE SOMEONE."
BUT WHAT GOOD IS IT TO COMPARE YOURSELF TO OTHER PEOPLE?
"YOU HAVE TO BUILD ON YOUR OWN SKILLS AND TALENTS."
WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE "QUALIFICATION" THAT YOU TALK ABOUT?
"DON'T FORGET, HONOKA ..."

"...THE THINGS THAT ARE TRULY IMPORTANT."
"THE MASTER OF YOUR FATE...
...IS YOU, YOURSELF."
"O-KAY."
"I DON'T REALLY UNDER-STAND, BUT..."
"...IF YOU SAY SO, GRAMPS."

I SEE.
YOU KNEW THE TRUTH, AFTER ALL.
"I WON'T FORGET."
IT'S FINE TO THINK ABOUT THE MEANING OF LIFE.
BUT...
...THE FACT THAT YOU ARE WHAT YOU ARE...
...IS SOMETHING YOU SHOULD NEVER QUESTION.
I PROMISED NOT TO FORGET...

BECAUSE YOU UNDER-STAND...

HERE.

IT'S A GIFT.

I'M AMAZED THAT I FORGOT.

HA!

HA HA!

YOU'RE RIGHT.

...A KATANA?!

THIS IS...

THE OLD MAN WHO OWNS THE SWORD WORKS THAT IS GOING OUT OF BUSINESS IS SICK IN BED.
I STOPPED BY TO VISIT HIM BECAUSE HE WAS AN OLD FRIEND, AND...
...I ENDED UP STAYING FOR A LONG TIME.
AND SO...
LET ME TAKE THE BROKEN ONE.
I'LL SEE IF THE OLD MAN CAN RE-PAIR IT.
HE'LL HAVE TO LIVE ANOTHER 20 YEARS TO FINISH IT ALL IF WORK KEEPS COMING IN AT THIS RATE!
...HE ASKED ME TO GIVE THIS TO WOLKEN'S DAUGHTER.
AH...
HONOKA...
WHAT IS IT, BOGIE?
I'M A LITTLE BUSY RIGHT NOW.
AH!

GOOD LUCK. ♡

YES, YES. I UNDERSTAND.

HURRY AND GO.

I PROMISED TO MEET WITH A CLIENT!

S--

SORRY!

NORU-GRAMPS!

MEI LIN!

THANK YOU!

WORK 11
[Wall of Logic]

IN A DANGEROUS OUTLANDS REGION CALLED THE ROKUGOU DESERT LIVES A MISTRESS OF THE DUNES...

...HUMANS STILL THRIVE IN THIS PLANET'S HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT.

CENTURIES AFTER THE GREAT WAR DESTROYED CIVILIZATION AND TURNED ALL LAND INTO DESERT...

THERE TRULY IS A GIRL LIKE THIS.

WHOA...

...A REAL PROFES-SIONAL...

AN S.O.S. WAS RECEIVED FROM AN ARCHEOLOGICAL EXPEDITION. IT SEEMS THAT ALL OF THE MEMBERS WERE MURDERED, EXCEPT FOR ONE.

SOUNDS AS IF THEY MET UP WITH A HERO OF SAND DRAGONS...

HOW TERRIBLE!

WHAT'S WRONG, HONO-KA?

THIS NEWS...

AN EXPEDITION GUIDED BY A PROFESSIONAL DUNE RUNNER GETTING CAUGHT IN THAT KIND OF PREDICAMENT...
...WILL BE BAD NEWS FOR ALL DUNE RUNNERS.
MAYBE DUNE RUNNERS AREN'T WHAT THEY USED TO BE.
How pathetic!
HA HA!
THE DESERT IS FULL OF SURPRISES, EVEN WHEN YOU THINK YOU'RE READY FOR ANYTHING.
THAT'S TRUE.
BUT, WE'VE SEEN THAT SORT OF DISASTER A LOT LATELY.
WELL!
THAT'LL GIVE THE GREENHORNS A CHANCE. MAYBE THEY WILL BE A LITTLE MORE CAUTIOUS.
むにっ
I HAVE THE PERFECT JOB FOR YOU, HONOKA.
Huh?

IF IT'S WORK, I'LL DO IT!
TAKE IT EASY, KIDDO.
IT'S AN ESCORT JOB--
SORRY TO INTERRUPT YOUR CONVERSATION, BUT I MUST SPEAK TO HONOKA.
BOGIE! WHAT'S WRONG?
I JUST LEARNED SOMETHING MORE ABOUT THAT DESERT DISASTER YOU TWO WERE DISCUSSING.
WHAT MORE?
THE ONLY SURVIVOR IS BEING TREATED IN THE HOSPITAL HERE IN TOWN.
HER NAME IS LIDELL DARMAUGE.
IT'S LIDELL, HONOKA.

LIDELL!!

ARE YOU OKAY?!

OH, HONOKA!

. . .

. . .

BECAUSE THE PAPER SAID YOU WERE INVOLVED IN A DISASTER!

AH. NOW I UNDER-STAND.

WHAT'S WRONG? WHY ARE YOU SO EXCITED?

NO BIG DEAL.

I'M JUST IN FOR A CHECK-UP.

ACTUALLY...

...I WAS FINE BEFORE THAT JOB WE DID TOGETHER.

SINCE THEN, I JUST CAN'T SEEM TO GET MYSELF MOVING.

I HAD BEEN TRYING TO GET AHEAD FOR SO LONG.

NOW I'VE SUDDENLY LOST SIGHT OF MY AIM IN LIFE.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH MYSELF.

I THINK I SHOULD JUST GIVE UP BEING A DUNE RUNNER...

...OR SOME-THING.

WHAAAT?!

YOU CAN'T GIVE UP JUST LIKE THAT--
OH, DON'T LOOK AT ME THAT WAY.
I BECAME A DUNE RUNNER TO KILL THAT MONSTER.
I TRIED TO FORGET MY DOUBTS AND FEARS.
NOW I'M THINKING ABOUT THEM...
THAT'S ALL.
I...
...I LIKED YOU BETTER WHEN YOU WERE A DUNE RUNNER, YOU KNOW?

ACTUALLY, THINKING ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES IS PRETTY EXCITING.
THEN...
...I HAVE TO MAKE YOU LOVE THE LIDELL WHO DOES OTHER THINGS.
...
UP UNTIL NOW, I NEVER THOUGHT I COULD DO ANYTHING ELSE.
AH... WHAT SHOULD I DO?

I FEEL BAD THAT THE TEAM HAD SUCH A BUNGLER FOR A GUIDE.

I DIDN'T REALIZE I WAS LOSING MY TOUCH.

BY THE TIME I KNEW WHAT WAS HAPPENING, IT WAS TOO LATE. I WAS IN THE HOSPITAL.

I'LL HAVE TO APOLOGIZE TO THEM LATER...

.....?

LIDELL?

BOGIE...

IT'S TIME TO LEAVE. YOU'LL BE LATE.

THAT'S OKAY. YOU DON'T HAVE TO WATCH OVER YOUR BAD BIG SISTER.

THE REST OF THE TEAM. THEY'RE ALL--

HONOKA...

DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME.
GET GOING NOW.
SHE SEEMS TO BE A LITTLE CONFUSED.
IT MAY BE BEST NOT TO BURDEN HER WITH FACTS FOR A WHILE...
...AND TO LET HER REST.
.....
HONOKA?

I'M ALL RIGHT.
I WAS JUST THINKING THAT EVEN LIDELL HAS DOUBTS ABOUT HERSELF.
I'M ALWAYS HAVING DOUBTS, TOO.
BECOME AN OFFICIAL DUNE RUNNER FIRST.
THEN YOU CAN HAVE THE LUXURY OF DOUBTING ALL YOU WANT.
OH SURE ...

I'M SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING.
MY NAME IS HONOKA.
She's just a kid...
ARE YOU MISS NINA?
I'M PLEASED TO MEET YOU, HONOKA.
UM, YOU WANT TO HIRE AN ESCORT?
YES. I'M SORRY I'M IN SUCH A RUSH.
I WOULD LIKE YOU TO GUIDE ME HERE.

THAT'S THE PLACE WHERE LIDELL AND HER EXPEDITION RAN INTO TROUBLE.

HUH?

THERE'S NOTHING THERE BUT SAND. IT'S THE MIDDLE OF THE DESERT.

HONOKA...

I HAVE... *BUSINESS* THERE.

THAT IS THE PLACE. THERE IS NO MISTAKE.

.....

COULD IT BE...

I'M SURE I'LL ENJOY THE MEAL.

THESE RATIONS MIGHT NOT BE THE SORT OF THING YOU'RE USED TO.

IT DOESN'T MATTER.

AH.

I'M SORRY. I DIDN'T MEAN TO MENTION IT.

.....

...IS THAT SOMEONE IN YOUR FAMILY WAS PART OF THE EXPEDI-TION--

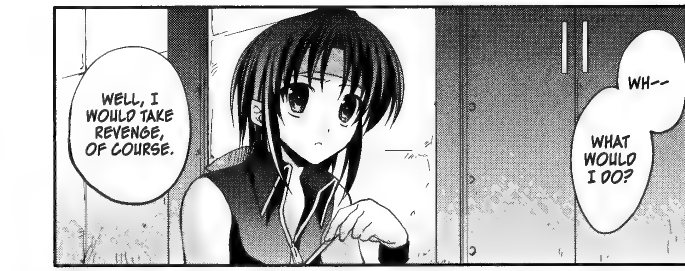
...THAT THE REASON YOU WANT TO GO TO THE SITE OF THE INCI-DENT...

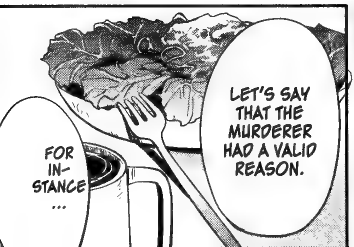
THE ATTACK BY SAND DRAGONS WAS NOT JUST BAD LUCK.

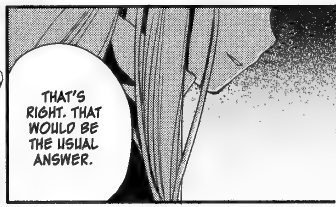
IF YOU NEED A REASON FOR GOING, THAT ONE'S AS GOOD AS ANY.

HONOKA ...
...IF MEMBERS OF YOUR FAMILY WERE SUDDENLY MURDERED...
...WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

HUH? WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?
IT HAS TO DO WITH MY FAMILY.
I SEE.


WELL, I WOULD TAKE REVENGE, OF COURSE.
WH--
WHAT WOULD I DO?


FOR IN-STANCE ...
LET'S SAY THAT THE MURDERER HAD A VALID REASON.


THAT'S RIGHT. THAT WOULD BE THE USUAL ANSWER.

...THE PERSON WAS PROGRAMMED TO COMMIT MURDERS LIKE THAT.
JUST TAKE THAT AS AN EXAMPLE.
THANK YOU FOR THE MEAL.
PLEASE NOTIFY ME WHEN WE ARRIVE.
WHAT MADE YOU ASK THAT KIND OF QUESTION ALL OF A SUDDEN?
THAT'S RIGHT.
SOMETHING LIKE THAT CANNOT BE A REASON, YOU KNOW.
HUH?
THAT ISN'T A REASON.

DEFECTIVE COMPONENTS MUST BE DESTROYED.

MISTAKES MUST BE CORRECTED.

DO YOU NEED A REASON FOR COMMITTING MURDER, TOO?

.....

トトトトド

HONOKA ...

...WE HAVE ARRIVED AT THE DESIGNATED LOCATION.

AH!

VERY WELL.

IT'S BEEN A WHOLE DAY SINCE THE UNFORTUNATE OCCURRENCE. I AM SURPRISED THE CORPSES ARE STILL HERE.

INSECTS ARE EVERYWHERE.

BE CAREFUL, HONOKA.

ROGER THAT ...

NINA?!

WHAT IS THAT GIRL DOING?!

SOMETHING OUT THERE IS MOVING!

BOGIE! BACK ME UP!

NOT EVEN THE CREATURES OF THE BORDER-LANDS...
...WILL EAT INFECTED MEAT.

LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!

HMM. HE LOOKS AS IF HE'S JUST ASLEEP.

NINA!!

IF YOU DON'T GET A MOVE ON--

NINA?!

IT'S JUST A DEAD THING.

IT'S NO LONGER A PERSON.

YOU...

THAT PERSON ...

WHAT YOU DID JUST NOW...

...DO YOU UNDER-STAND WHAT IT MEANS?!

YOU SHOULD-N'T SAY THAT.

WHA...

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO DOESN'T UNDERSTAND.

DON'T SUPPOSE OTHER-WISE.

THE BLAME SHOULD BE LAID ON THE *PHENOMENON* THAT KILLED THESE PEOPLE.

I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU.

"MISTAKES MUST BE CORRECTED."

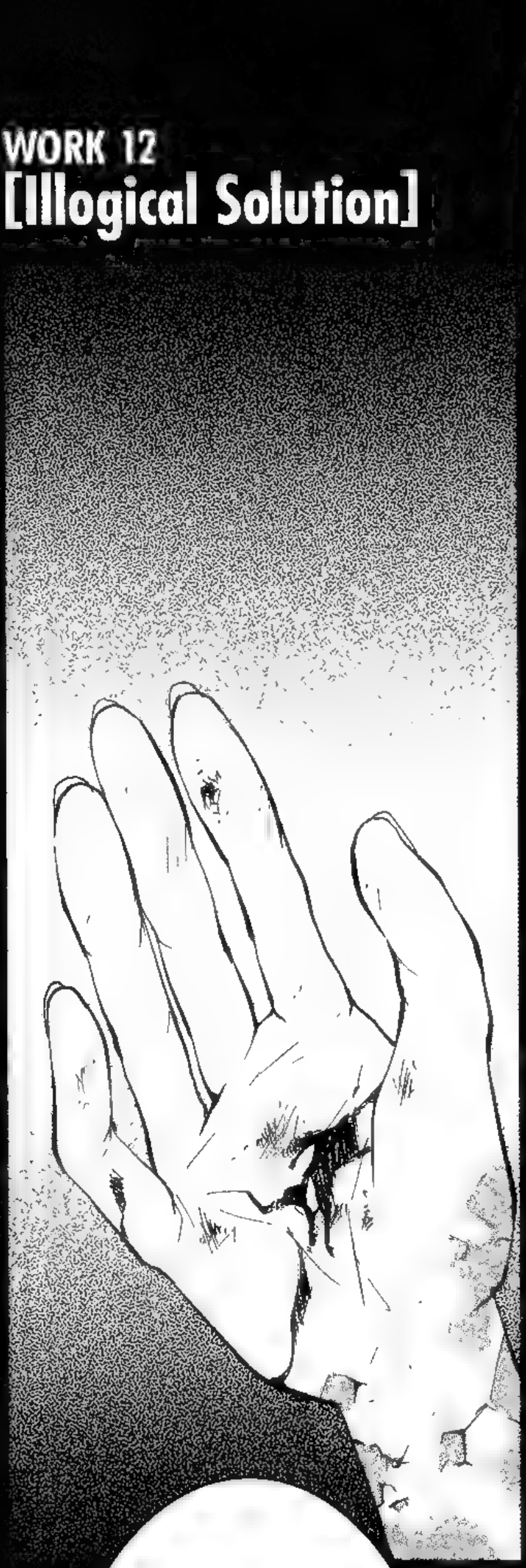
THE PHE...

...PHENO-MENON, YOU SAY?

I UNDER-STAND THERE WAS A SURVIVOR.

I MUST ELIMINATE THIS SURVIVOR BEFORE IT KNOWS WHAT HIT IT.

WORK 12
[Illogical Solution]



WHAT DO YOU MEAN "KNOWS WHAT HIT IT"?

WORK 12
[Illogical Solution]

HONOKA ...

YOU SAID SOMETHING ABOUT THE SURVIVOR...

WHAT DID YOU MEAN?

DID YOU FORGET "THE LAW OF THE BORDER-LANDS"?

THAT IS *HER* BUSINESS.

A LITTLE MORE ...

DO YOU HAVE A LITTLE MORE TIME TO SPARE?

I DON'T CARE ABOUT THAT.

I HAVE AN-OTHER JOB FOR YOU.

十一

.....
A LONG TIME AGO THE WORLD CHANGED SUDDENLY BECAUSE OF THE GREAT WAR.
THE HUMANS OF THAT TIME WERE MORE TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED THAN WE ARE NOW, BUT THEY MADE A GRAVE MISTAKE.
THEY CREATED A WEAPON THAT DESTROYED THE BALANCE OF POWER ON THE PLANET AND AS A RESULT...
...THE GREAT WAR BEGAN.
IN ORDER FOR CIVILIZATION TO CONTINUE ...
... WE MUST KEEP THE VARIOUS POWERS IN BALANCE.
DANGEROUS IDEAS AND INVENTIONS MUST BE ELIMINATED.

HOW DOES THAT FIT IN...
...WITH THE THINGS YOU SAID BEFORE?
THEY EXPLAIN THE TRUE NATURE OF THE MONSTER THAT ATTACKED THE ARCHEO-LOGICAL EXPEDITION.
IT IS A CREATURE THAT LIVES FOREVER BY JUMPING FROM HOST TO HOST.
IT IS A SOLDIER VIRUS.
!!
"THE THING I WAS SEARCH-ING FOR..."
...WHAT LIDELL SAID WHEN I SPOKE TO HER.
THAT'S ...
KOFI
!!
THE EARLY SYMPTOMS ARE HATRED MADE FLESH.
THEN THE ILLNESS BEGINS IN EARNEST.
THE COURSE OF THE ILLNESS IS TERRIFYING.

HUH...
...AND DESTROY.
...THE PERSON INFECTED WILL START TO MURDER ...
WITHOUT ANY REGARD FOR THE PEOPLE AROUND HIM...
HUH?!
Destroy!
Demolish it!
I DON'T BELIEVE IT!
SO LIDELL ...?!
THE SURVIVOR FROM THE SITE OF THE TRAGEDY ...
...THERE'S NO QUESTION THAT PERSON IS A CARRIER.
THE VERY EXISTENCE OF THE DISEASE WILL DESTROY THE BALANCE OF POWER IN THE WORLD.
THEREFORE, IF YOU KNOW THE WHEREABOUTS OF THE SURVIVOR...
...YOU MUST TELL ME WHERE THIS PERSON IS.

IF YOU FIND OUT WHO THE CARRIER IS, I ADVISE YOU NOT TO GET TO CLOSE.

ELIMI-NATING IT IS MY JOB.

BUT YOU KNOW SO MUCH ABOUT THIS--

IF I FIND THE SURVIVOR, I'LL CONTACT YOU.

I UNDER-STAND.

WHAT EXACTLY ARE YOU?

BECAUSE MISTAKES MUST BE CORRECTED.

"'EXISTENCE OF THE DISEASE WILL DESTROY THE BALANCE OF POWER IN THE WORLD.'"

AT THAT TIME...
I DEFINITELY CUT THE CREATURE!
WHY MUST LIDELL BE THE ONE?!
THAT ISN'T MY CONCERN!
IF NINA'S STORY IS TRUE--
HONOKA, WHAT WILL YOU DO?
NONE OF THAT HAS ANYTHING TO DO WITH LIDELL!
ALL THAT STUFF ABOUT WEAPONS FROM THE GREAT WAR...
...AND THEORIES ABOUT THE BALANCE OF POWER IN THE WORLD!

I REMEMBER HER SAYING THAT SHE HAD PLANS FOR THE FUTURE.
SHE WAS SO PROUD OF HER INTENTIONS THAT SHE COULDN'T HELP SMILING.
PLEASE, LIDELL! DENY NINA'S STORY IN YOUR USUAL STUBBORN WAY!
THINGS LIKE MURDER...
...OR DESTRUCTION...
LIDELL JUST WOULDN'T DO THOSE THINGS!
LIDELL!

"DEAR NO-NORA ..."

IT CAN'T BE...

HUH!!

HUH!!

"...I MUST GO FAR AWAY FROM HERE."

"SORRY FOR LEAVING SO SUD-DENLY, BUT..."

Aagh!

"WELL, DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME."

"...YOU'LL PROBABLY WORRY ABOUT ME."

"BEING THE PERSON YOU ARE..."

GAAAAAAAAH!!!!!!

CRACK

"I HAVE ALWAYS TAKEN CARE OF MYSELF."

"I AM MISTRESS OF MY FATE."

"AND I WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO."

CRUMPLE

LIDELL...

AT THE MOMENT, YOU SHOULDN'T BE WORRYING ABOUT ME!

LIDELL!

.....

SOMEBODY WAS SEEN WALKING INTO THE DESERT TO THE EAST OF TOWN.

THAT WAS PROBABLY HER.

WHAT IS RIGHT OR WRONG...

...IS NOT THE QUESTION.

I'LL FIND LIDELL AND ASK HER, TO HER FACE, ABOUT ALL THIS!

HUFF!

LIDELL IS PROBABLY ALREADY AWARE OF THE SITUATION.

HUFF!

1

THAT'S WHY SHE LEFT TOWN.

DON'T JUST STAND THERE GUESSING!

JEEZ!

HERE YOU ARE.

SHIT YA...!

Hmm

UGH...

HUFF!

Destroy!

KI-I!

HUFF!

THEN MY JOB WILL BE EASY.

...THAT'S WHY YOU CAME ALL THE WAY OUT HERE, ISN'T IT?

TO COMMIT SUICIDE...

Gh...

Ghaaah!

HUFF

HUFF

GYAH!

JUST RELAX, NOW.
!
HONOKA...
...YOU'RE A LOT MORE STUBBORN THAN YOU LOOK.

I WARNED YOU NOT TO GET INVOLVED IN MY AFFAIRS.

.....

LOOK AT HER.

Guh...

SHE ALREADY KNOWS THAT SOMETHING IS TERRIBLY WRONG.

Gah!

Ah!

SHE'S ALREADY LOST CONTROL OF HERSELF. SHE'S A MONSTER NOW.

I DON'T CARE!

NO MATTER WHAT FORM SHE'S IN...

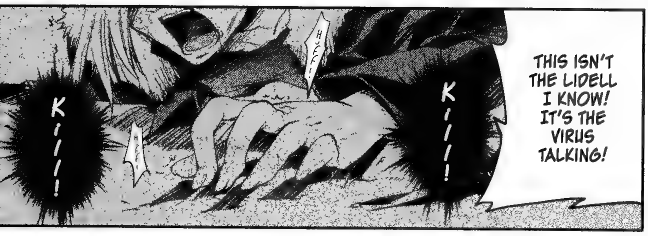
...LIDELL IS *STILL MY FRIEND.*

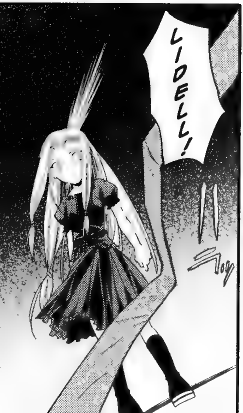
TO KILL HER JUST BECAUSE SHE'S DIFFERENT NOW...
THAT'S SOMETHING I COULD NEVER FORGIVE!
GUGH UH...
"...JUST BECAUSE SHE'S DIFFERENT NOW"?
YOU DISGUST ME.
TAKE YOUR LITTLE FRIENDSHIP ACT SOMEWHERE ELSE.

ITS EXISTENCE IS A MISTAKE.
GRAB
IT IS A CREATURE THAT SHOULD BE ELIMINATED FROM THIS WORLD.
THIS LUMP OF FLESH IS NO LONGER YOUR FRIEND, HONOKA.
GAAH!
MOVE OUT OF THE WAY, HONOKA.
I'M JUST DOING...
...MY JOB.

Nina...
!!
YOU... WHAT ARE YOU?
I AM "THE ERASER."
THAT'S WHAT THEY CALL ME.
BLURB!
LIDELL?!

Hatred!
Kill everything before it kills me!
OUCH...!
Destroy!


THIS ISN'T THE LIDELL I KNOW! IT'S THE VIRUS TALKING!
KILL!
KILL!


LIDELL!

PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER!!

LIDELL!

YOU'RE NO QUITTER!

DON'T GIVE UP, LIDELL!

A BLUE COS-MIC EYE?!

Ho...

...noka...

.....

LIDELL?!

I ENJOYED SEEING YOUR THIRD EYE, HONOKA...

...BUT IT CHANGES NOTHING. WE MUST SOON PUT AN END TO THIS FARCE!

LIDELL IS FIGHTING FOR HER LIFE!

LEAVE HER ALONE!

I BELIEVE IN LIDELL!

GAH!

GAH!

GYAH!

HOW CAN YOU STILL TALK THAT WAY?

DAMN!

But, you know me, Honoka.

I am the mistress of my fate.

You say "I believe..."

How very like you...

LIDELL!

Because you believed in me, Honoka...

I never forgot who I was...

LIDELL!

GET A HOLD OF YOURSELF!

Thank you...

I knew that Honoka...

...would not allow me to give up...

LIDE...

.....

LIDELL!!

IN THE END... I COULDN'T DO ANYTHING.
.....
EVEN THOUGH I STILL WANT TO BECOME A QUALIFIED DUNE RUNNER...
...I COULDN'T EVEN SAVE A FRIEND.

I'M PAYING MY RESPECTS.
WHAT DO YOU WANT NOW?
TO BE ABLE TO MAINTAIN HER IDENTITY AFTER THE VIRUS HAD ADVANCED SO FAR...
...WAS QUITE REMARKABLE.
IF YOU'RE GOING TO GRIEVE OVER THE DEAD...
...YOU NEED TO HAVE MORE SELF-CONTROL...
"Thank you, Honoka..."
YOU GAVE HER STRENGTH.
UNTIL THE END...
...SHE WAS STILL HERSELF.
I WILL PRACTICE MY SELF-CONTROL.
...SO YOU CAN KEEP FROM CRYING OVER THE DEPARTED.

SO I WON'T EVER DOUBT MYSELF.
...SO I CAN LAUGH AT TROUBLE.
THOUGH YOU NEVER ADVISED ME TO DO THIS, I KNOW IT IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO...
FOR ME, DOUBTING IS A POINTLESS EXERCISE.
I'LL BECOME A QUALIFIED DUNE RUNNER...
...JUST LIKE YOU.
WATCH CLOSELY...
...LIDELL.

WORK 13
[Power of Smile]

IN A DANGEROUS OUTLANDS REGION CALLED THE ROKUGOU DESERT LIVES A MISTRESS OF THE DUNES...

...HUMANS STILL THRIVE IN THIS PLANET'S HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT.

CENTURIES AFTER THE GREAT WAR DESTROYED CIVILIZATION AND TURNED ALL LAND INTO DESERT...

NAH. I WAS JUST GUIDING THEM TO A NEARBY TOWN, SO...

GOOD JOB, HONOKA.

WAS IT DIFFI-CULT?

ANO-THER JOB DONE...

...?

YOU'RE SO POPULAR!

STILL, THAT WAS A REPEAT CLIENT, HONOKA.

IT WAS JUST A COINCI-DENCE.

...A REAL PRO-FES-SIONAL...

THERE TRULY IS A GIRL LIKE THIS.

HEY. LONG TIME NO SEE.

OLD MAN!

YOU'RE FINALLY STARTING TO LOOK LIKE A PROFES-SIONAL.

DON'T CALL ME LITTLE!

...THAT THERE'S A LITTLE KATANA-PACKING DUNE RUNNER WHO'S BEEN RUNNING AROUND.

LATELY, EVERYWHERE I GO I HEAR STORIES...

CREAK

?

AW SHUCKS. NO, REALLY-- I STILL HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO.

WITH ALL HER HARD WORK, SHE'S EARNING QUITE A REPUTATION.

UMM...
...BIG SIS-TER?
I REME-MBER YOU--
WHAAAT?!
MII-CHAN, YOUR CAT, DISAPPEARED AGAIN?!
DWWW!
PINK!
THIS IS GREAT.
I THOUGHT HONOKA HAD GONE ON TO PROFESSIONAL DUNE RUNNING, BUT CAT SEARCHING...
ウェェェ
DON'T CRY, KID!

ALL RIGHT.

LET'S GO SEARCH TOGETHER.

HMPH.

SORRY!

I SEEM TO HAVE HAD A JOB COME UP.

EVEN SO, SHE HAS BEEN PRETTY SAD LATELY.

She looked so unhappy when she was with me.

SINCE I SAW HER LAST ...

...HER ATTITUDE HAS CERTAINLY IMPROVED.

YEAH.
I TRIED SEARCHING IN A LOT OF OTHER PLACES, TOO, BUT HE WASN'T IN ANY OF THEM.
DID YOU CHECK THE PLACE WHERE WE FOUND MII-CHAN LAST TIME?
I SEE ...
OW!
WHAT'S GOING ON?!
WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GO--
WHOA!
HONOKA?!
OH! LONG TIME NO SEE!

DON'T TALK TRASH.

I'M ON ASSIGN-MENT.

ARE YOU KIDNAPPING SOME KID?

WHAT ARE YOU DOING AROUND HERE?

SAME GARBAGE AS USUAL...

CAT?!

OH, YEAH ...

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS CAT?

THANKS!

THAT'S A GOOD THEORY!

HMM... WELL, THERE ISN'T ANY WIND TODAY.

ISN'T IT A GOOD BET THAT THE CAT IS NAPPING SOMEWHERE SUNNY?

ASSIGN-MENT?

CAT?

HONOKA?
SOMEWHERE QUIET, MAYBE?
A SUNNY PLACE, HUH?
HMM...
ELLENOR!
UH, SORRY. RIGHT NOW I'M LOOKING FOR A CAT.
YOU LOOK BORED.
YOU SHOULD JOIN ME FOR TEA.
.....
うつる?
POOR HONOKA...

I'll give you an allowance.
IF YOU NEED A JOB THAT BADLY...
...I CAN HIRE YOU AS A MAID.
NO THANKS. I'D PROBABLY PASS OUT FROM THE STRESS.
Yes, I think much of my profession.
GOOD-NESS! I WAS JUST JOKING!
THAT'S A LIE. SHE WAS SERIOUS.
I'M GIVING ANOTHER CONCERT SOON.
YOU'RE INVITED!
I'LL BE THERE!

IS THAT YOUR FRIEND, BIG SISTER?
THAT'S RIGHT.
AT ONE TIME SHE WAS A CLIENT.
THOUGH I CALL MYSELF A DUNE RUNNER...
...IF I HADN'T MADE SO MANY MISTAKES, I COULD HAVE DONE A BETTER JOB--
THAT'S WHAT I ALWAYS THINK, ANYWAY.
.....
SOMETIMES I LEARN MORE FROM MY CLIENTS THAN THEY LEARN FROM ME.
I'M NOT AS DEPENDABLE AS I'D LIKE TO BE.

IT'S A GOOD IDEA TO LOOK IN A PLACE THAT IS SUNNY AND QUIET.

WELL, THEN...

...LET'S FOCUS ON THE PROBLEM AND START SEARCHING AGAIN!

IS IT OKAY IF WE TAKE A SHORT-CUT THROUGH HERE?

BIG SISTER...

...WHAT ABOUT THAT WAY?

GOOD IDEA!

IS SOMEONE YOU KNOW BURIED HERE, BIG SISTER?
SHE WAS SOMEONE I REALLY RESPECTED.
SHE WAS ALWAYS HONEST WITH HERSELF AND WITH EVERYONE ELSE--

YOU MADE ME VERY HAPPY.

WHEN I'M IN TROUBLE...

...YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO LISTENS TO ME, BIG SISTER.

SHE WAS JUST LIKE YOU, BIG SISTER.

I WANTED TO SUPPORT YOU. I ALWAYS TRY TO DO THAT.

BUT, I AL-WAYS--

I LISTENED ...

...BECAUSE YOU WERE SO DETERMINED.

I'M GLAD, TOO. BECAUSE OF YOU, BIG SISTER, I'M ABLE TO SMILE.

...THEY WERE ALL GLAD TO SEE YOU.

ALL THE PEO-PLE WE MET ...

I THINK THAT IT'S THE SAME FOR EVERYONE YOU COME IN CONTACT WITH.

YOU SHOWED ME THAT I WASN'T ALONE.

IT'S BECAUSE YOU TOOK MY TROUBLES SERIOUSLY.

I'M--

BUT THAT IS THE OBVIOUS THING TO DO.

YOU MAKE EVERYONE SMILE.

THAT'S THE SORT OF PERSON YOU ARE, BIG SIS-TER.

!

AH...

"JUST BE YOURSELF, HONOKA."

BUT THAT'S SO EASY!

JEEZ.

I GUESS IT WAS SOMETHING I ALREADY KNEW DEEP DOWN INSIDE.

IT'S JUST THIS--

WHAT?

HONOKA!

UH...HE'S BLACK WITH WHITE TIPS ON HIS FEET AND TAIL.

DESCRIBE THE CLIENT'S CAT FOR ME.

WHAT'S WRONG? DID YOU FIND HIM?

I GUESS I DID, IN A MANNER OF SPEAK-ING.

OR SHOULD I SAY THAT I CAUGHT HIM?

PURR...

?

Bogie isn't usually so confused...

.....

EEEK!

YAWN...

IS THIS A HUMOROUS SITUATION?

Ha ha ha ha!

NOT EXACTLY ...

SORRY.

IT'S JUST THAT ...

...SOMETIMES THE SOLUTION TO A PROBLEM ...

...IS RIGHT UNDER YOUR NOSE!

—END—

THE THIRD
Apprentice Girl in the Desert Planet

STAFF
ARIKO ITO
KYOKO TARASAWA
TOMOKO MATSUZAKI

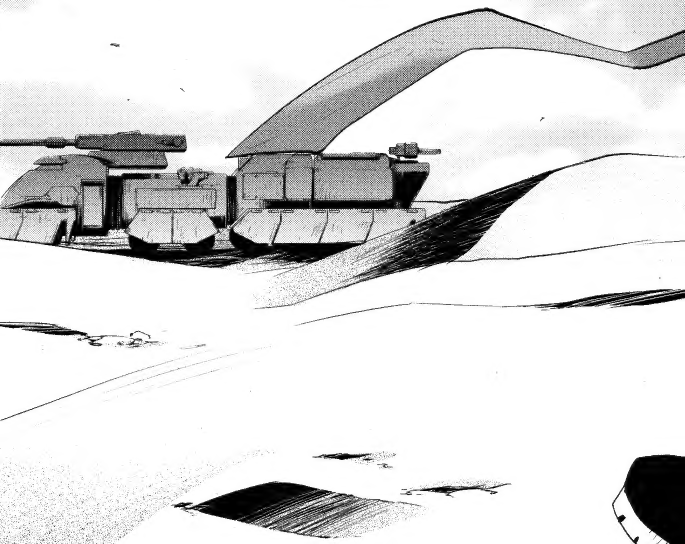
DESIGN
YOSHIAKI TSUBAKIYAMA
(HONA GRAPHIC)

Afterword, or something like it.

Because this is my first experience with a series, I may have made some mistakes, but they haven't prevented me from coming this far. A year ago, when I began to worry about the story line of this series, I felt as if I was struggling right along with Honoka to become a professional. I hope that I can come back to this book some day and be proud to read it, to see it as the work of a mature artist. But for now, thanks for sticking with me this long. I look forward to seeing you again soon!

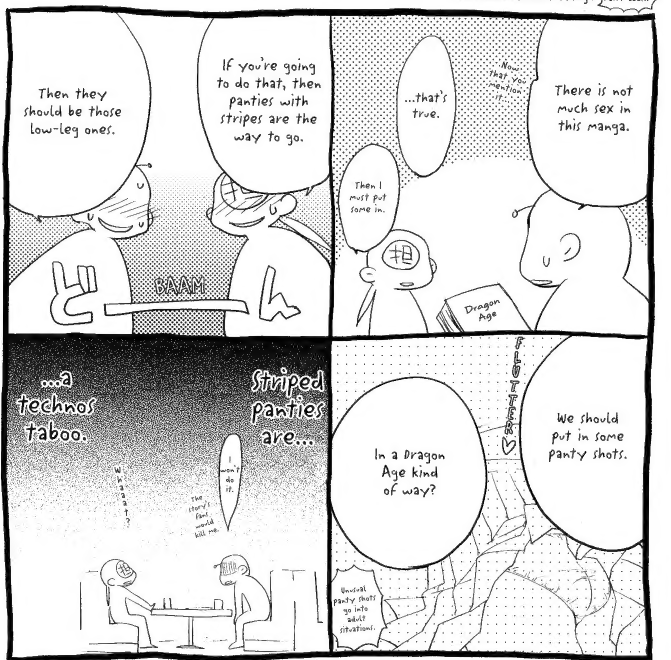
2006.11 伊藤有子

Ariko Itou



THE THIRD™

VOL.2
Apprentice Girl on the Desert Planet



But I did draw her butt.

Kadokawa Comics Dragon Jr.